

# Single Language Analysis: Article- ‘Not about sex’

The opinion piece ‘Not about sex’ written by Robyn Riley and published in the *Herald Sun* newspaper, October 2, 2007, displays a number of persuasive strategies the writer has used to ridicule the parents of teenage daughters for not letting them get the Gardasil vaccine. This issue has been raised as it has been found that one in five parents have opted out in letting their daughters receive the Federal Government’s free Gardasil vaccine. Riley believes that this is due to a fear that the vaccine will make their daughters promiscuous, regardless of the fact that it will help stop cervical cancer. The article was written in an infuriated and at times sarcastic tone, using a number of different persuasive techniques to persuade the reader on the writer’s contention. The writer uses inclusive language, the use of visual imagery and expert opinion in order to support her purpose that it is wrong not to have your daughter receive the Gardasil vaccine due to the concern that it might make them promiscuous.

The writer employs inclusive language throughout the article in order to engage the reader, making it easier to persuade the reader on the writer’s purpose. An example of inclusive language used in the text is “We don’t live in the dark ages”. This inclusive statement uses the word ‘we’, addressing the eighty per cent of parents who have done the right thing letting their daughters receive the vaccine. The use of inclusive language makes the reader feel like they are a part of the article that they have been included in the discussion, like the writer is speaking directly to them. It also helps the reader reject an idea. In this case saying “We don’t live in the dark ages” suggests that because we don’t live in the dark ages there is no reason why parents are not allowing their daughters to receive the Gardasil vaccine, supporting the writers contention. Another persuasive technique used in the article was the use of visual imagery.

The article uses a visual aid in the form of a photograph in order to persuade the reader. In this article there is a photograph of vaccine pioneer Professor Ian Frazer about to give the Gardasil vaccine to a teenage girl, Therese Raft. This staged photograph shows both Ian and Therese situated in the light in front of a black backdrop with smiles on their faces. This was done to reinforce the purpose and position the reader that every teenage girl should be receiving the Gardasil vaccine. By doing so the photograph is suggesting that the daughter will be grateful for it. In some ways trying to make the twenty percent of parents who haven’t let their child have the vaccine feel guilty. This may make them reconsider getting the vaccine. The fact that Therese was chosen for the photograph was in order to continue to persuade the reader. Therese is in the photograph looking very healthy, with the light shining on her hair and her clear complexion glowing, looking very happy with a big smile on her face. This is persuading the 20 per cent of parents that have refused their daughters having the vaccine as they will look at Therese and see a perfect daughter, a daughter every parent would want to have. This

again makes those twenty percent of parents who have not let their daughters have the vaccine feel guilty and possibly rethink getting the vaccine. This picture used in the article supports and backs up the writer's contention that it is wrong not to have your daughter receive the Gardasil vaccine due to the concern that it might make them promiscuous. Another way to help persuade the reader on the writer's contention is the use of expert opinions.

The opinions of experts were used in this article to help persuade the reader. An example of the use of an expert's opinion is "Federal Health Minister made a plea to parents of schoolgirls who had refused permission to reconsider. He was supported by Dr Edith Weisberg, a reproductive health research expert, who confirmed some Australian parents were not giving permission because they thought their daughters would see it as a green light to have sex". From these expert opinions, it is clearly said that they are for every schoolgirl getting the Gardasil vaccine, which is supporting the writer's contention. This is addressing the eighty percent who have done the right thing and gotten the vaccine. The use of the experts supported the idea that "we don't live in the dark ages" by agreeing with the writer saying that getting the vaccine is the right thing to do. The use of these experts gave credibility to the article as experts are believed to have special knowledge of a subject beyond that of the average person. In this case the experts used did support the writer's contention that parents should allow their daughters receive the Gardasil vaccine and that it is ridiculous to not let them have it due to the concern that it might make their daughters promiscuous.

Language is used to manipulate and persuade through the use of persuasive strategies of inclusive language, expert's opinion and the use of a visual image. The use of these strategies support the writer's purpose that it is wrong not to have your daughter receive the Gardasil vaccine due to the concern that it might make them promiscuous. By the use of inclusive language the reader was able to feel a part of the article with a feeling of being included, like the writer was speaking directly to them, addressing the eighty percent who have not received the vaccine. The use of a photograph was also used in order to visually persuade the reader. By making it a staged photograph with a teenage daughter looking very happy and healthy getting the Gardasil vaccine making the twenty per cent of parents who have not let their daughter receive the vaccine feel guilty. Expert's opinions were employed in order to help back up the writer's contention by using an expert's opinion that had the same beliefs and opinions as the writer, which was addressing the eighty percent of parents who have done the right thing letting their daughters have the Gardasil vaccine. As well as persuading the reader as everyone tends to listen to experts because they are believed to always be right. This persuades the readers on the writer's purpose that it is wrong not to have your daughter receive the Gardasil vaccine due to the concern that it might make them promiscuous. This piece through the use of persuasive strategies provided the reader with an informative and persuasive read.